AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO ALBANIA

563 ing, accompanied by the women on tambour-
533 ines and they by the men on violins and
585 cornets. Their dances are picturesque in their native costumes with their hair either flowing or bound up, according to the particular dance. For those who may interpret their dances, there is a rich abundance of narrative in store for the reader. The harmony of tambourine, violin and cornet is not at all unpleasant when played by skilled musicians. The singing, however, is not harmon-
563 ized, the performers using only one voice.
[461] Regardless of where these gypsies may live they earn their living in the same way, and being too lazy to cultivate even a small truck-garden, they lead easy, happy-go-lucky exist-
[427] ences, and they have their huts free of rent, provided they work a few days out of the year for their ground landlord, Shevket Bey. Strange as it may seem, these wandering,
[326] anchorless people are about the only local blacksmiths found in this country, for the Albanians proper have a curious aversion to this occupation.

245 After leaving this quaint little town of Bradshesh, and penetrating into the heart of Albania towards Elbasan, large, beautiful

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Kuturman until his family died out and the plate disappeared. The summer grazing which belonged to the village of Bërshenj near Fulqet was three days away on Mt Dragû. The Highlanders, living at the mouth of the river Mat, had their summer pasturages on Mt Vermosh five days away from their winter homes.

A clear distinction was drawn between the laws governing private and public pasturages. In broad outline what was private could be fenced or sold or built on at its owner's sole pleasure, and was divided up between his sons at his death. What was public was marked off by boundary stones from neighbouring properties but had neither outside fence nor internal boundaries. Though all the households in the tribe or village had equal rights in it and could each graze as many animals, cut as much firewood or timber, build as many huts or folds and shoot as much game on it as they pleased, these rights came to them only as members of the community and were not transferable to strangers. They could not sell their grazing rights to an outsider, share a hut with him or graze his animals along with their own; if they wanted to give an outsider friend pasturage, they must do so on their private ground. They could not sell part of the common or dispose of firewood, timber or game for their individual gain; only the community could negotiate such sales, and all the profit or loss from them was community profit or loss. They could not build a permanent house on the common. When the head of a family died, his rights were not divided among his sons like his private property but descended to them jointly. Gypsies, it may be added, were allowed to pitch their tents, graze their animals and gather firewood on the common. Being as resourceful in Albania as elsewhere, they needed no permission and snared what game they could; as they did not carry firearms they could not shoot it.

Those communities which did not possess their own private summer pasturage, hired or rented it from near and far. Breg i Matit rented theirs partly from Shkrel and partly from Theth, and the latter was a full week's journey away. Modernity having come to Albania, they paid cash down. Fulqet rented a neighbour's mountain every summer and paid for it in the old-fashioned way with half an oke of butter, the same of sour-milk cheese and 2½ oke of sweet cheese for every forty sheep. Perlat again gave their own winter pasturage in return for leave to summer on the mountains of Lurë and Selitë. In Turkish times, Lurë asked neither money

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233 nor produce nor an exchange for summering the flocks brought to
437 the Crown (Kunora) by tribesmen living north of Shkodër, but
427 welcomed them because their sheep manured the fields. Com-
241 paratively recently, Lurë gave a Selitë man leave to summer his flocks gratis on Mt Murije, which, lacking their manure, would hardly have been worth the labour of tilling. Dervish Ali of Fulqet too was glad to let hundreds of sheep graze free in his meadows on Mt Dragû. Surroj and Arrn pastured sheep belonging to the Hereditary Captain of Mirditë without payment, because they also had so little arable land.

609 Except where the soil was so poor that the manure was welcome,
685 as in Lurë, or where grazing was very plentiful, as in Theth, outsiders were rigidly excluded from alps which were owned or rented by a community. Nangë said it had not enough feed for its own flocks. Martenesh, Gurrëzë and Breg i Matit said they did not want their pastures disturbed by strangers. All infringements of the ban, both petty and grave, were punished by fines.

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dependent on charity. At best the elders fixed a sum to be paid by the murderer for leave to work his own land: the money paid, the avenger gave his word not to molest him; or a 'strong' friend guaranteed his safety as he tilled his fields. This arrangement continued until he was killed elsewhere or the avenger consented to make peace.

Various devices were tried to outwit an avenger too venomous to make the smallest concession to his 'imprisoned' enemy. The commonest was for the murderer to let his land to a neutral on the usual Albanian terms of 'halves'. Once some men of Lurë, trusting to the prevailing immunity of women from attack, dressed in their wives' clothes and went out to work. They were soon discovered and compelled to return home. Frequently a woman was made to work alongside the men, the assumption being that from fear of accidentally hitting the women and so disgracing himself the avenger would not fire on the party. The man who murdered the brother of Kodhel Dede of Nezhar in Shpat belonged to a large family, the members of which went to work with a woman between every two men. Kodhel thus found it impossible to kill one of them and after a long period of years made peace. Sometimes a man's wife kept watch while he worked; if she signalled the enemy's approach, he seized his rifle and prepared to defend himself. During Kodhel Dede's feud with the Trepsanishti family he found himself long baulked by the vigilance of his enemy's wife. At last his chance came on the eve of 15 August. The wife had her mind set on making *melata* (sacrificial foods) for distribution on the festival, and, forgetting her husband who was at work on the threshing floor, she went home to make them. Kodhel, who had crept up through a maize field, shot her husband as soon as her back was turned. In the hilly landscape of Fulqet in west Mat a different sort of watch was kept. The 'imprisoned' men, aided by friends, dug a hole on top of a hill commanding a wide view. One of their best shots, rifle in hand, settled down in this hole ready to snipe the avenger if he tried to kill any of the men at work.

Work in the fields apart, an 'imprisoned' murderer might for short periods leave his house under escort of a friend. This friend had to be 'strong', otherwise the murderer might be killed by his enemy, a lasting disgrace to the man whose protégé he was for the time being. Sometimes murderer and avenger had a common friend who took the former out; in that case the friend ran less risk